

## Ribbon cutting marks chemistry laboratory upgrades at Northern New Mexico College

November 1, 2013



An institutional agreement between Los Alamos National Security, LLC (LANS) and [Northern New Mexico College](#) means an investment of \$75,000 this year has helped the college bring its chemistry facilities up to standards, purchase much-needed equipment and expand from three research and teaching laboratories to five. The assistance, supplied through the Lab's Community Programs Office, is also helping the math and science department garner additional grants and partnerships. The Lab's assistance was acknowledged recently with a ceremony designed to showcase the chemistry classes' ongoing research and expansion.

"When I arrived at the college four years ago, we had 30 students in the chemistry program," said Ulises Ricoy, a professor at Northern and its chair of the Biology,

Chemistry and Environmental Science program. “By making incremental improvements and with support such as that from LANS, we now have 70 chemistry students and a 90 percent graduation rate. Our five-year plan to is make Northern a center for excellence for chemistry within the region with our students well prepared to work at the Lab or elsewhere.”

Funds have been used to purchase analytical chemistry equipment, including for chromatography and mass spectrometry, giving students access to the tools they need to use for promising careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

The partnership also includes stronger ties to Los Alamos resources in the form of scientists who can provide guidance or give a lecture but as the department has increased its reputation, other organizations are partnering with it including New Mexico Highlands University (another LANS agreement partner) and even the National Science Foundation.

Scholarships, mentoring and ties to organizations such as the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) are helping the students advance in their careers and LANS is helping encouraging this networking as well with several students attending its October conference in Texas with its support.

“Help from the Lab is enabling us to springboard on to an even better future for our students as they prepare for needed positions in chemistry and biology,” said Ricoy.

**Los Alamos National Laboratory**

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